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ABSTRACT

In this lesson plan, grade 3 to 5 students examine elements of fluent reading through oral poetry performance. They use the Internet to identify a poem to prepare and perform for the class. The main objective of this lesson concerns improving fluency. During four hours over a span of five days, students will: be able to identify text written in poetry form and the elements that are applicable (e.g., rhyme, repetition, onomatopoeia); analyze oral expressions (e.g., pause, accent, rhythm) that are used in poetry to convey meaning; develop effective styles for reading poetry out loud; and create an oral performance of a self-chosen piece of poetry using fluency and expression to convey meaning. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A performance critique is attached. (PM)

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Poetry: A Feast to Form Fluent Readers

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Grade Band

3-5

Estimated Lesson Time

4 hours over a span of 5 days

Overview

Students will use Internet resources to observe poetry performed orally and discuss elements of the performance that lead to fluency and meaning of the written text. Students then use online resources to select a poem to perform out loud. Following an "analyze and apply process," students will prepare and perform their poem for the class. A performance critique sheet is used to evaluate students' oral performance, and can be used for self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation.

From Theory to Practice

Rasinski, T. (2000). Speed does matter in reading. *The Reading Teacher, 54,* 146–151.

- Excessively slow, disfluent reading leads to less overall reading, has been associated with poor comprehension, and creates frustration for the reader.
- Strategies to increase the fluency of students include the use of poetry, which is often overlooked as a motivator for elementary students.
- Discussion of fluent and meaning-filled reading helps students develop a metacognitive understanding that the meaning of a passage is not only carried in the words, but also in the way the words are presented to the reader.

Student Objectives

Students will

- Be able to identify text written in poetry form and the elements that are applicable (e.g., rhyme, repetition, onomatopoeia)
- Analyze oral expressions (e.g., pause, accent, rhythm) that are used in poetry to convey meaning
- Develop effective styles for reading poetry out loud
- Create an oral performance of a self-chosen piece of poetry using fluency and expression to convey meaning

Resources

- Performance critique sheet
- Favorite Poem Project–Lee Samuel video
- **Online poetry sites:**
  Poetry4Kids

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Giggle poetry
Poets.org
Listen & Write
Scholastic Writing with Writers
Just4Girls
Shel Silverstein poetry

- Computer lab or banks of research computers and one projected computer system (Day 1)
- Highlighters and note-taking tools (Days 2–4)
- Video camera, optional (Day 5)

Instructional Plan

Introduction (Day 1---60 minutes)

1. View the Favorite Poem Project–Lee Samuel video on the site Favorite Poem Project: Americans Saying Poems They Love. Lead a discussion of Lee's reading of the poem, *Casey at the Bat.*

   What words stood out to you as Lee read the poem?

   Are there any phrases you can remember?

   Did he pause while he was reading?

   Do you think Lee has only read the poem a few times? Why or why not?

2. View the Favorite Poem Project–Lee Samuel video a second time while students listen for oral expression.

3. View the print version of the poem. Prompt students to identify clues in the text that might have helped Lee in his reading of the poem. In general, you might discuss the following:

   Rate: Does the speed of the reading match the feeling or mood in the poem?

   > *Example:* The reader's voice speeds up when reciting the third stanza to emphasize building excitement.
   >
   > *Example:* The reader slows down when concluding the poem creating suspense, with one final pause before the final word "out."

   Repetition: When you read the repetition, does it clarify to the listener what the author wants to emphasize?

   > *Example:* The reader pronounces "mighty" with more tone and volume to be sure the listener understands that Casey is mighty.

   Onomatopoeia: Does the word sound like its meaning?

   > *Example:* The reader forms a sneer with his lips when reciting the word.

   Voice: Does the reader use voice to identify characters?

   > *Example:* The reader uses the voice of an umpire when saying, "strike one."

4. Allow time for students to explore the online poetry sites listed in RESOURCES. Students select a poem based on its appeal and readability and print it for the next day's class activity.

Analyze and Apply Process (Day 2---30 to 45 minutes)

Encourage students to use an "analyze and apply process" when preparing to read their poem out loud:

- Read the poem through once and identify any words that you do not know. Use current classroom techniques to identify word meanings and discuss with students how knowing the meaning of a word can help them in reading it out loud.
- Read the poem a second time. Do you understand the poem's message? How will this affect your reading? What emotions will you use when reading the poem?
- Read the poem a third time. Are there any clues (e.g., repetition, punctuation marks, onomatopoeia) in the text that tell you how to read the poem out loud?
- Practice reading the poem a few more times.
- Rehearse your poem by reading it out loud to your partner (i.e., paired reading). How does the poem sound to your partner? The performance critique sheet can be used for peer evaluation.

Rehearsal (Days 3 and 4---5-10 minutes per day)

Provide students optimal time to practice reading their selected poem. As a homework assignment, students rehearse their poem with a parent or adult. Other possible times for rehearsal include transitions and reader/writer workshops.

Poetry Feast (Day 5---120 minutes)

Students perform an oral reading of their poem in small groups or in front of the whole class. Focus on the celebration of the written word performed.

The performance critique sheet is then used to evaluate the oral reading. Students will evaluate their own performance and also the performance of one of their peers. If peer evaluation is not common practice in the classroom, guidance from the teacher is highly recommended.

Extensions

- Students create their own poem to perform out loud.
- Student performances are videotaped for the purpose of creating a class video poetry collection (similar to a class poetry book). Don't forget to secure video release forms if your school requires them.
- Students prepare a poetry performance for another class or parent night.
- Students create a class book entitled "How to read poetry out loud."
- Students listen to recordings of authors (e.g., Pretlusky, Silverstein) reading their own poetry aloud.

Student Assessment/Reflections

The performance critique sheet can be used on three levels to evaluate student performances:

- Teacher evaluation
- Peer evaluation
- Self-evaluation

Options for scoring:

- Option 1: Review all performance critiques and develop a narrative assessment for each student.
- Option 2: Assign numbers to each level (e.g., wow = 3; working = 2; whoa = 1). Sum up the scores of each performance critique (i.e., self, peer, and teacher) to determine an average score for assigning a grade.
- Option 3: Use the self and peer evaluations as feedback and assign a grade based on the teacher evaluation.

Use your professional judgment when engaging in assessment activities.

IRA/NCTE Standards

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

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read·write·think

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PERFORMANCE CRITIQUE

Student Performer: _____ **Date:** _____

Poem: _____

Author: _____

This critique was completed by (circle one): myself classmate teacher

Directions: Consider each criterion listed. Be sure you understand what the criterion means before you complete the critique. Mark only one level for each criterion. Be sure to make written comments at the bottom.

Use the following guidelines when evaluating the poetry performance:

Whoa = Student shows lack of understanding or needs practice in skill.
Working = Student displays an ability to read the poem with expression.
Wow = Student has mastered oral performance of the poem.

CRITERION	LEVEL		
	Whoa	**Working**	**Wow**
I recognize the text as poetry.			
The reader understands the poem and is able to read it with emotion.			
The reader is able to make the meaning of the poem clear.			
The reader is fluent and expressive.			

Comments:

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